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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Seventy-first year

Identical letters dated 22 June 2016 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

Since our previous letter to you, dated 16 June 2016, the Palestinian people, including children, have continued to be killed, injured and terrorized as a result of Israel's ongoing violations of international law, humanitarian law and human rights law throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. Unprotected, despite the very clear provisions of international law according protection to civilians under foreign occupation, the Palestinian people continue to endure countless human rights violations and war crimes at the hands of the Israeli occupying forces. Tensions have consequently remained high, and anger, fear and frustration among our people are rising as the faith that peace can ever be achieved continues to fade with each passing day.

Each letter that we send to you not only contains a list of just some of the crimes committed by the occupying Power against the Palestinian people and their land but also tragically contains names and stories of innocent lives that were lost at the hands of the occupation. And with each name and story, a new cycle of hate and anger fester among an occupied people who have been left defenceless against a monstrous occupying Power that unleashes its lethal weaponry against them on a daily basis. No doubt Israel, the occupying Power, has been bolstered by the culture of impunity and lawlessness that continues to prevail owing to the failure of the international community to hold Israel accountable for any of its violations and crimes against the Palestinian people and throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. Such impunity has not only absolved Israel from its legal obligations as an occupying Power but has emboldened its continued perpetration of crimes without fear of punishment.

A prime example of the occupying Power's sheer brutality took place yesterday, 21 June 2016, when the Palestinian people were faced yet again with immense grief and sorrow owing to the loss of yet another child at the hands of the

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occupation. The latest young boy to fall victim to the viciousness of the Israeli occupying forces was Mahmoud Ra'fat Badran (age 15), from the village of Beit Ur al-Tahta in the occupied West Bank. Mahmoud, along with his brothers Amir (age 16) and Hadi (age 17), as well as their friends Daoud Abu Hassan (age 16) and Majd Badran (age 16), were coming back from a visit to the only nearby swimming pool. Their vehicle was en route home on a road close to an Israeli-only bypass road, which is also referred to as "road 443" or the "apartheid road". Suddenly, the car came under heavy gunfire by nearby Israeli occupying forces, killing Mahmoud and seriously injuring the other young boys in the car. The Palestine Red Crescent Society said that Israeli occupying forces prevented paramedics from attending to the injured Palestinian boys for over 90 minutes. Moreover, three of the young boys who were finally treated in a hospital had bullet wounds to the head and chest.

It should be noted that "road 443" is an Israeli-only road that is 15 miles long, with more than half of the road cutting through the occupied West Bank. In addition to violating Palestinians' freedom of movement and access, with devastating repercussions on health, education and livelihoods, such apartheid roads have consolidated and strengthened the presence of illegal Israeli settlements across the occupied West Bank, ensuring superior access for illegal settlers at the expense of the indigenous Palestinian civilian population.

With regard to the tragic killing of Mahmoud, a military spokeswoman of the occupying Power stated that the young boys were "mistakenly hit" while Israeli occupying forces were responding to alleged reports that Palestinians were "throwing rocks and firebombs" at illegal settlers on the above-mentioned Israeli-only road. The international community must not accept that the occupying Power, which, according to the Fourth Geneva Convention, has the obligation to protect the occupied people, continues to "mistakenly hit" Palestinian civilians, including children. Even if they were responding to alleged stone throwing, how can that ever justify riddling a car with bullets and shooting people in the head and chest? How can the occupying Power, which also happens to be a full member of the United Nations, be allowed to conduct itself in such a criminal manner, killing, injuring and destroying the lives of so many Palestinians, day in and day out? And how can the international community continue to allow the occupying Power to commit such crimes with complete impunity? The Palestinian leadership calls for an international investigation into this latest crime in order to hold the perpetrators accountable for their crimes and for destroying the lives of yet another Palestinian family. Enough is enough.

Sadly, for the family of Mahmoud, this is not the first tragedy they have faced because of Israel's 50-year occupation. In fact, Mahmoud's father, a diplomat with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Palestine, was a prisoner of the occupation and was held in an Israeli prison for 16 years. In addition to that, while he was in prison, his family home was demolished by Israeli occupying forces. And now, the family is mourning the cold-blooded murder of their eldest son, Mahmoud, whose body still remains with the occupying Power and has not been returned to his family for a proper burial. At the same time, Mahmoud's family is at the hospital bedside of their other two sons, praying for their survival as they continue to fight for their lives as a result of bullet wounds to the head and chest. This is just one example of how lives under occupation are shattered by the policies of occupation.

While it is impossible to record every single crime perpetrated daily by the Israeli occupying forces and terrorist settlers against the Palestinian people, listed below are just some of the many crimes committed by Israel in the recent period, including home demolitions, mass arrests and detentions, which, along with its ongoing illegal blockade of the Gaza Strip, are all clearly intended to make the lives of Palestinian civilians as miserable as possible, and which severely affect every man, woman and child.

15 June 2016

- Israeli occupying forces detained 11 Palestinians, mostly during predawn raids into the West Bank.
- A Palestinian youth, Saleh Abu al-'Anad (age 21), sustained serious wounds when he was run over by an Israeli occupying vehicle during a predawn raid into Balata refugee camp, east of the city of Nablus.
- Israeli navy forces detained 10 Palestinian fishermen while they were sailing offshore of Gaza.

16 June 2016

- Israeli occupying forces stole five Palestinian-owned cars during a predawn campaign in the village of Bal'in, west of Ramallah.
- Israeli occupying forces injured two Palestinian minors and detained eight Palestinians in a predawn raid across the West Bank.

18 June 2016

- Israeli occupying forces in a jeep chased four Palestinians while they were walking down a street near the town of Azoun in Qalqilia, running over a youth, Hamza 'Oweisat, and detaining the rest.

19 June 2016

- Israeli occupying forces detained 14 Palestinians, including two women, during predawn raids across the West Bank.
- Israeli occupying forces stationed to the east of Khan Younis, in the southern Gaza Strip, opened heavy machine-gun fire on farmers, preventing them from reaching their land.
- A young Palestinian man, Arif Jaradat (age 21), who had Down syndrome, succumbed to his wounds sustained on 4 May in Sair, in Al-Khalil.

20 June 2016

- Israeli occupying forces detained 16 Palestinians from across the West Bank, including two journalists, and shot and injured two brothers with rubber-coated bullets.

21 June 2016

- Mahmoud Ra'fat Badran (age 15), from the village of Beit Ur al-Tahta in the occupied West Bank, was killed by Israeli occupying forces. His brothers,

Amir (age 16) and Hadi (age 17), as well as their friends Daoud Abu Hassan (age 16) and Majd Badran (age 16), who were in the car with Mahmoud, also sustained serious injuries by Israeli gunfire and remain in serious condition.

It is without a doubt that the above-mentioned violations are in grave breach of international humanitarian law, as well as international criminal law as articulated in the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. For these war crimes, we will continue to seek accountability and justice through all legal and peaceful means. At the same time, we call again upon the international community, particularly the Security Council, to act now to protect the Palestinian people and diffuse this dangerous situation, which clearly constitutes a threat to international peace and security. As we have stated in the past, the Palestinian people cannot remain the exception to the responsibility to protect civilians from atrocities and flagrant breaches of the law, as they are not just statistics but human beings whose lives are being constantly shattered. Yesterday's tragic event can only provide more evidence of the occupying Power's total disregard for the lives and rights of the Palestinian people, as well as of its total contempt for international law. The time is now for the international community to finally bring an end to Israel's impunity and to its 50-year occupation in order to bring overdue justice to the Palestinian people.

This letter is in follow-up to our 588 previous letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the territory of the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 16 June 2016 (A/ES-10/724-S/2016/544) constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations being committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer
of the State of Palestine to the United Nations